

VZCZCXRO2824
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHJM #0142/01 0281448
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 281448Z JAN 08
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0352
INFO RUEHKK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 000142

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/28/2018
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PREL](#) [IS](#) [PGOV](#)
SUBJECT: PA FOREIGN MINISTRY SEEKING INCREASED ENGAGEMENT
WITH USG, CONTROL OVER PLO MISSIONS ABROAD

Classified By: Acting Principal Officer Thomas M. Duffy, for reasons 1.
4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. PA Foreign Minister (MFA) Assistant Deputy Minister Mufid Shami (with responsibility for Western Hemisphere affairs) told PolOff on January 28 that the MFA has a "good feeling" about USG commitment to the peace process post-Annapolis and takes the upcoming visits of Generals Fraser and Jones as "an indication of U.S. seriousness." He criticized Hamas actions in the breakdown of Gaza-Egypt border controls as "highly undermining to the PA," said the GOI has been unhelpful in not acceding to PA requests to take over crossing responsibility, and criticized Arab states for pushing PA-Hamas dialogue. Riyadh al-Maliki is the Foreign Minister for all practical purposes and is treated as such by PM Fayyad and President Mahmud Abbas (Abu Mazen) as such, Shami said, but is not officially appointed due to Fatah pressure to put a faction loyalist in the spot. The PA MFA is continuing efforts to increase PA control over PLO missions abroad. President Abbas, not the MFA, will likely choose the successor to outgoing Washington PLO office head Afif Safiah, Shami said, but the PA will consult with the USG on a shortlist of candidates. End summary.

PA Positive on post-Annapolis USG Actions

¶2. (C) PA MFA official Mufid Shami told PolOff on January 28 that the MFA has a "good feeling" about USG commitment post-Annapolis and takes the upcoming visits of Generals Fraser and Jones as "an indication of U.S. seriousness about both Roadmap implementation and thinking about permanent status matters."

PA Blames Hamas, Israel for Gaza Impasse

¶3. (C) Shami said the breakdown of Gaza-Egypt border controls was "highly undermining to the PA," and hurt PA efforts to differentiate between improving political and security prospects in the West Bank and Hamas-generated misery in the Gaza Strip. He said the PA cannot forcefully eject Hamas from Gaza, and will instead "beat them at the ballot box," as Palestinians see progress in permanent status negotiations and PA-driven improvements. The GOI has been unhelpful, he said, alleging that "Israeli PM Olmert failed to give President Abbas anything concrete on giving Gaza's crossings to the PA," at their January 27 meeting, "and created a situation that anyone could see would lead to chaos at Rafah." He said "several Arab states" are also pressuring the PA to start dialogue with Hamas. He also said the GOI has done nothing on internal West Bank checkpoints or outposts, which he said hurts the PA's campaign to demonstrate results on the ground and a break from past

governments' weak performance.

"Maliki is the Foreign Minister, and Yet
He's Not, Because of Fatah Pressure"

14. (C) Acting FM Riyad al-Maliki is for all practical purposes the PA Foreign Minister, and is treated by PM Fayyad and President Abbas as such, Shami said. Yet, he has not taken the oath to be formally installed as FM, Shami said, and thus is officially only acting minister, because of Fatah pressure to put a faction loyalist in the spot.

Incremental Moves Put the PA
in Charge of PLO Posts Abroad

15. (C) Shami said the PA MFA is continuing the efforts of former FM Nasser al-Qidwa to increase PA control over PLO missions abroad. He said al-Maliki will gather the PLO/PA mission heads from Europe and Central Asia at a mid-February conference in Ankara, and then do the same for Western Hemisphere mission chiefs at a February 20 conference in Buenos Aires, partly to make clear that the PA, not Fatah Political Bureau chief (and Oslo rejectionist) Faruq al-Qaddumi, determines Palestinian foreign policy and its representatives.

No Decision on U.S. PLO Office Rep,
Abbas Retains Decisionmaking Power

16. (C) President Abbas has sole power to appoint Palestinian

JERUSALEM 00000142 002 OF 002

diplomatic representatives, Shami said, but has increasingly delegated authority for appointments, especially below chief-of-mission level, to the MFA. Abbas, not the FM, will likely choose the successor to outgoing Washington PLO office head Afif Safiah, he said. Shami pledged to consult the USG whenever he learned of a shortlist of candidates, as he said everyone wants an effective Palestinian representative.
DUFFY